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Four Power Working Group completed first series meetings yesterday. Approved questionnaire regarding German reunification, European security and Berlin to provide framework for development positions to be reviewed at second series Working Group meetings tentatively scheduled for early March. Copy of questionnaire being sent to addresses by airgram.

Preliminary discussion questionnaire in last two meetings disclosed a more than usual readiness to engage open exchange of views on informal and personal basis. Also revealed general consensus on following points:

1. General Western position basically sound but there were possibilities for embellishment, additions, modifications and simplification.
2. In view of necessity for carrying support Western public opinion for firm course re Berlin essential to present demonstratively reasonable proposals.

3. Great

Drafted by: EUR:GER:GPA:ETLampson:dg72

Telegraphic transmission
classification approved EUR - Foy D. Kohler

Clearances:

GER - Mr. Vigderman
GER - Mr. Hillenbrand

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Great weight should be given to views of Germans in reunification questions but Western Powers must take initiative in making proposals in security disarmament and European ~~security~~ fields. However, French were more rigid on reexamining aspects of reunification involving free elections and direct contacts between East and West Germans whereas Germans were willing to examine possibilities of not making free elections first step in reunification process.

4. Western proposals must include some counterproposal on Berlin to cover period until reunification. Germans emphasized in their view essential point was ~~any~~ continued presence of allied troops in Western Berlin endowed with NATO ~~character~~ character.

5. West must provide proposals giving opportunity ^{for} prolonged discussion if Soviets wish to spin out negotiations by appointing deputies to continue after Foreign Ministers meeting. Discussion of principles of peace treaty most likely subject. Right of all-German Government to take part in peace treaty negotiations could be reserved. French and Germans doubted peace treaty drafts could be discussed article by article but agreed to idea putting forward principles of peace treaty to counter Soviet peace treaty. Germans would not commit themselves re present Government views on Gerstenmaier advocacy of peace treaty discussion.

6. Magnetic

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6. Magnetic attraction of West Germany for East Germans was an asset which should be capitalized on, Germans emphasized ~~difficult~~ difficulties in this field. Strong doubts expressed re confederation idea and possibility that West could turn Soviet confederation proposal against USSR. Believed confederation in usual sense of word tantamount to recognition GDR and giving Soviet veto over ^{FedRep} ~~FedRep~~ policy. Germans thought federal idea with wide powers in economic and social field given to Laender worth ~~examining~~ examining.

7. ~~xi~~ Role of UN, if any, should be limited. Although injection of UN in some way recognized as being valuable in dealing with public opinion, particularly in uncommitted countries there was general fear that substantive discussion reunification issue in UN would be risky. French and Germans particularly skeptical.

8. Proposals made by Germans regarding turning against Soviet Union articles 14 and 16 of their peace treaty dealing with human rights and German readiness to give special assurances to their Eastern neighbors were valuable contributions.

French and Germans stressed interdependence, disarmament, European security and reunification. Both considered concept any security system limited to Europe fallacious; British expressed doubts as to feasibility withdrawal US troops from Germany and relocation other parts Europe on ground that remaining areas would be militarily indefensible.

French

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French revived proposal for giving United Germany special status in NATO comparable to that of Finland's politico-military relationship with the Soviet Union. ~~XXXXXX~~ Admitted this would involve withdrawal US troops from Germany. Emphasized that military disengagement impossible unless accompanied by political disengagement providing greater freedoms for Central Europe.

Consensus was that no European security proposals even of very limited character should be based on present dividing line between Fedrep and SovZone although British put forward tentative feeler regarding limited demilitarized zone along lines Eden proposal of July 1955.

Foregoing views all expressed on understanding they did not rpt not represent views of governments and you should exercise extreme ^{caution} ~~cautions~~ in using foregoing with officials.

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